



YMCA OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the YMCA of Snohomish County's Early Childhood Education Programs. The YMCA is committed to providing warm, nurturing care in a safe environment. Your child will have daily opportunities to play with new friends, learn new skills, build self-confidence, and enjoy many fun and challenging activities designed to meet his or her developmental needs.

Our philosophy strongly emphasizes a multi-sensory approach to learning. Teachers create a familiar and secure, yet engaging environment allowing children to explore and experience at their own pace. Theme-related materials are introduced into the environment regularly to bring together relevance and meaningful interactions. Teachers are trained in age-appropriate emotional recognition and coaching. Children are taught to recognize their feelings, work to express their emotions in meaningful ways, and to empathize with their peers.

We also build on individual strengths to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging them to be active and creative explorers willing to try out their own ideas, experiment with their interactions, thereby learning to think and evaluate for themselves.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish our overall goal of developing the whole child and fostering school readiness.

It is a pleasure to work with your family. Please take a few minutes to read this handbook as it provides important information you need to know and may answer many of your questions.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the child care director at the center.

Once again, welcome and thank you for choosing the YMCA of Snohomish County. We look forward to working together to create an exceptional learning experience for your child.

In mind, body and spirit,

YMCA ECE Program Staff

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MISSION & GOALS

GOALS & PURPOSE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The YMCA of Snohomish County, organized in 1899 and incorporated in 1901, is today recognized as the largest child care provider and nonprofit in Snohomish County. The goals and purpose of the Early Childhood Education Programs are as follows:

Help children achieve their potential through lessons of:

- Self-awareness, confidence, and feelings of self-worth
- Interpersonal relationships
- The core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility
- Academic enrichment
- Physical skills
- Health and nutrition

Support and strengthen the family unit to:

- Improve communication among family members
- Increase family ability to work and play together
- Help families share their values
- Increase "sense of community" with other families

Deliver child care programs for children in a positive YMCA environment by:

- Providing safety, support, care, and fun for children
- Operating within YMCA principals and philosophy
- Broadening community, national, and world understanding of children and parents through our daily programs

YMCA OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

The YMCA of Snohomish County is composed of people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations united in sharing the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility through programs that build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the YMCA of Snohomish County that no person shall be subjected to discrimination because of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, including gender identity, religion, creed, marital status, disabled or Vietnam Era Veteran status, or the presence of any physical, mental, or sensory handicap.

YMCA of Snohomish County does not discriminate against children, families, or staff with disabilities. Children, families and staff with physical, mental or sensory disabilities are encouraged to participate in all the activities and opportunities available. Children are assessed on an individual basis to determine whether a child with individual needs can be cared for within our programs with reasonable accommodations.

The YMCA of Snohomish County is committed to treating families with respect for their individual needs and difference.

PROGRAM PRACTICES

PROGRAM HOURS

YMCA Early Childhood Education programs operate from 6:30 am - 6:30 am, Monday through Friday. **We ask that you have your child here by 8:30 am so that we can maintain consistency and continuity in our programs.** Please call the center by 8 am to make arrangements with the Center Director if your child(ren) will be late or absent. See the rate sheet for more information on closures and holidays and special hours.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

A typical daily schedule for our early childhood education program is as follows:

- 6:30 am Open, free choice activity centers
- 8:30 am Breakfast, group time
- 9:00 am Circle time, story and music, teacher-led activities
- 11:00 am Outdoor play, large motor activities
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:00 pm Nap, quiet time
- 2:30 pm Snack
- 3:00 pm Planned and free choice activity centers
- 3:30 pm Circle and story time
- 4:00 pm Outdoor play
- 5:00 pm Free choice activity centers
- 5:30 pm Late afternoon snack
- 6:30 pm Close

PROGRAM STAFF

The YMCA has the highest standards for child development. A staff-to-child ratio of 1:15 for kindergarteners, 1:10 for preschoolers, 1:7 for toddlers, and 1:4 for infants ensures the greatest possible interaction and safety for your child. Lead teachers are over age 21 and receive a 20 hours of STARS approved certification in Child Growth & Development, Child Guidance, Health, Safety, and Licensing, Professionalism and Communicating with Parents. Each year teachers also received 10 additional hours in STARS approved training in a variety of topics relevant to their positions. Teaching assistants offer an additional support to children. All staff has first aid and CPR training, background checks, and regular in-service training.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The YMCA believes that children learn best through hands-on experiences. The room is arranged in activity centers to provide children with a variety of developmentally appropriate choices. Teacher-initiated enrichment activities such as art, science, cooking, story time, music, and games are also offered. Group time for sharing, discussing values, and teaching social skills is also held daily. Outdoor play, meals and snacks, and rest time round out the day. Religious activities are limited to sharing multicultural celebrations throughout the year. We wish to encourage respect of cultural and ethnic diversity with the support of teacher, class and whole program staff.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The YMCA welcomes children with individual needs into our program when reasonable accommodations can be made. Please identify any health concerns or individual needs your child may have when enrolling so that we can determine together what accommodations your child may need to be successfully included. Depending upon your child's need, completion of an Individual Care Plan and a meeting with the Program Director may be required prior to participation in the program to ensure that your child's needs may be accommodated.

SNACKS / MEALS

Breakfast and two snacks that adhere to USDA and DSHS licensed guidelines are provided daily. Mill Creek YMCA ECE Programs also serve lunch, which adheres to these same standards. We are committed to offering the healthiest options possible, providing nutrition education and role-modeling healthy choices. Please review the menu and alert the staff of any food allergies your child may have.

NAPPING

Preschool children take a daily nap after lunch. Kindergarteners are not scheduled to but are welcome to nap if tired. Please send a blanket and fitted crib sheet for your child's nap in order to make this time as relaxing as possible. Label these items with your child's name. Items will be sent home on Fridays for laundering. If desired, you may also choose to send one small pillow or stuffed animal with your child for comfort.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All belongings must be labeled. Do not send money, valuables, or toys with your child. Children will have a cubby to store their belongings. The YMCA cannot be held responsible for broken, lost or stolen items. Please remind your child to take everything home every day. Check the Lost and Found regularly.

EXTRA CLOTHING

Each child must keep a complete extra set of clothes for occasional accidents or spills. Please remember to replace items used or launder and return YMCA emergency clothing when borrowing it from the center. An extra swim suit is helpful if you are able to provide one.

FIELD TRIPS

We may take neighborhood walks and trips to the local park. Field trips in the mini-bus are also occasionally scheduled. Permission for field trips was given on the registration form. Please pay attention to fliers, newsletters, or postings that give you information on upcoming field trips. If it is inconvenient for your child to accompany us on a planned trip, we may be unable to care for your child on that day, as all staff will be needed for the trip. If you wish to limit your child's activity on a trip, please communicate with your center director.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & STATE FUNDING

The YMCA of Snohomish County makes every effort to ensure that no person, especially youth, will be denied access to programs and membership because of financial hardship. The YMCA's Financial Assistance Program is supported by contributions to the annual *Invest in Youth* campaign and United Way. The YMCA also accepts DSHS subsidies.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Please refer to your signed payment plan for information regarding absence and vacation credits.

CHANGE REQUEST FORMS

A Change Request Form is available at the Parent Center, the YMCA branch, or on our web site. It is required for all changes in care including site location, schedule, payment, vacation, illness, or withdrawal. Appropriate notice is required when making changes to your child's care. **Refunds and credits are not available without appropriate notice and approval.**

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

Please call the center by 8 am if your child will not be attending on any given day. A credit of 50% for the full week is available only if five consecutive days are missed accompanied by a doctor's note.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Fifteen days advance written notice is required for refunds due to withdrawal. If there is not notification of withdrawal, parent is responsible for full payment. Please use a Change Request Form for this notification.

LATE PICK-UPS

6:30 - 6:40 pm	\$10.00 per child
6:41 - 7:00 pm	\$30.00 per child
After 7:00 pm	\$30.00 plus \$1.00 every minute thereafter

Late pick-up fees will be due with the next month's payment. Consistent late-pickups may result in suspension or expulsion from the program at the sole discretion of the YMCA.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PARENT ORIENTATION

Parents are offered a tour of the center prior to or upon enrollment. A careful review of the Parent Handbook and Family Information Board will further orient new families. A parent may visit the center, ask staff for any clarification of policy, request a conference, or call the program director at the branch at any time.

BULLETIN BOARD

The Parent Information Board posts monthly schedules, staff names and hours, menu, curriculum, resources, and special messages. Please read it often. Bulletin boards for artwork and photographs may also be found for your enjoyment. Feel free to provide a family photo to the staff to display on the Family Photo Board. Children love to share their families and posting family photos add to their sense of identity and feelings of belonging.

COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT

Please take the time to talk with your teachers about your child's daily activities. If you would like a written report at the end of the day, please fill out the parent portion of the "My Day" form and place it in the designated location on the sign-in table upon arrival. Your child's teacher will have it ready for you at the end of the day. Keep the communication lines open for your child's best interest. If you'd like to share a particular talent, have access to needed supplies or resources, or have suggestions, please let the teachers know.

FAMILY NIGHTS

Family Events are offered regularly at the branch and within the ECE program. These are fun activities for the whole family and a great way to get to know other families in the program. Please join us as often as possible.

EVALUATIONS

You'll be asked to fill out a brief quality satisfaction questionnaire three times during the school year. We appreciate your assistance in completing these surveys, as your honest feedback will help us improve our programs.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee meets monthly to discuss program improvements and offer assistance to the child care program director. If you are interested in participating in this wonderful volunteer opportunity, let your center director know.

VISITING THE PROGRAM

Parent or guardians may visit and inspect the child care facility in which their child is enrolled during normal operating hours without advance notice. The YMCA prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any child, parent, or guardian who exercises this right.

Any parent/guardian whom the YMCA determines poses or may pose a risk to any child or individual at the child care facility, will be asked to leave immediately.

The registering parent may request in writing that another parent not be given access or inspection privileges. Such a request will be honored to the extent feasible and requires legal documentation.

Friends and acquaintances are not permitted to visit the site. Siblings are welcome when accompanying the parent/guardian.

Visitors must sign-in and out using the guest log and show photo ID. All guests will be checked against the Registered Sex Offender list and anyone on the list will not be allowed at the center.

The YMCA does not release documentation including sign-in and out sheets without a subpoena or other court order.

PARTICIPATION IN THE DECA PROGRAM

The ECE program participates in the DECA Program, a quality enhancement program. The purpose of the program is to help teachers and parents learn more about children's social and emotional health and resilience. The program will make it possible to identify the strengths and potential areas of growth for the children. Participation in aspects of the program are essential for its success. This includes completion of assessments Parent-Teacher conferences. Your consistent and active participation is appreciated.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

The YMCA of Snohomish County policy is based upon developmentally appropriate practice and the core values of **caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility**. These values shall be consistently encouraged.

Staff work closely with children to build relationships that foster trust and mutual respect. A variety of techniques are used to both prevent and correct undesired behavior. These may include role-modeling, redirection, positive reinforcement, accommodations such as changes to the environment, and natural or logical consequences.

Please read to your child their responsibilities and note that continuous unacceptable behavior is documented in writing and maintained in each child's personal file:

Child's Responsibilities

- Respect others and their belongings
- Respect the YMCA, buildings and vehicles
- Respect equipment and property in the building
- Remain with a staff member at all times
- Come immediately after school unless parent notifies a staff member otherwise (Kindergarteners)
- Return materials and equipment to the place you found them
- Finish activities and clean up afterward
- Speak for yourself

If the child's behavior is not acceptable and attempts at guidance have been unsuccessful, our procedures are as follows:

- Verbal and written communication (Communication Report)
- Written communication with a parent (Unacceptable Behavior Notification Form)
- Meeting between parent, director, and child, to discuss and develop a behavior contract
- One day suspension from the program (payment still required)
- Removal from program (payment pro-rated)

Suspension may occur without notice when behavior is uncontrollable and/or poses a threat.

Parents are encouraged to complete an Individual Care Plan for their child if there is a concern that a child's behavior may become an issue. Whether the behavior issues may be related to unusual or ongoing circumstances that affect behavior or a condition that may cause behavioral issue, making arrangements in advance is more effective in creating an environment in which children may be successful. Failure to create an Individual Care Plan and share information that identifies your child's individual needs may jeopardize the placement or continued participation by your child in the program.

HOME PROBLEMS

Any problem your child may have at home is likely to affect his or her behavior while at the Child Care Program. Please keep us informed of such problems, so that we can be sensitive to your child's needs. We would like to work as a team with your family. This will enable us to provide the best environment for your child's growth and development and help promote positive behavior.

In all events, if the unacceptable behavior continues, or is endangering the child's or other's safety, then the YMCA may immediately suspend or expel the child or children involved, without advance notice, and determined at its sole discretion.

HEALTH & SAFETY

PRACTICES CONCERNING AN ILL CHILD

If your child feels ill and cannot participate in the program he/she will be given a quiet place to rest and you will be notified. At the joint discretion of parent and site leader your child may be cared for during minor illness.

Children who have a fever or any contagious illness will not be allowed to remain at the site and you will be asked to pick up your child.

The following are examples of symptoms that might indicate the need for your child's exclusion from our program:

- Fever of 100 degrees F. or higher
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea (three or more watery stools in a 24 hour period)
- Draining rash
- Eye discharge or pink eye
- Too tired or sick to participate in daily activities
- Lice or nits

If your child has the above symptoms they will not be accepted into care until after the fever has subsided. If they develop these symptoms during the day we will require a parent or guardian to pick up the child from the center.

Notice will be posted on the Family Information Board if there is an instance of a communicable disease at the site.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

State licensing requirements do not permit us to administer medication without the written authorization from the parent or guardian. Any medication brought to the site **must be in its original container and clearly labeled with child's first and last names** and given to the teacher. This medication will be stored in a locked box and administered by an authorized staff member.

Hand sanitizers are considered an over-the-counter medication and require a completed Medication Authorization Form.

Non-prescription medication will be administered as specified on the manufacturer's label unless prescribed otherwise by a physician. The following medications may be given with written parent consent, only at the dose, duration, and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label:

- Antihistamines
- Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- Anti-itching ointments or lotions
- Diaper ointments or lotions
- Sunscreen
- Decongestants
- Non-narcotic cough suppressants

MEDICAL EMERGENCY / ALLERGIC REACTION PLAN

If your child is at risk of having an allergic reaction from food or bee stings or other medical emergency that requires specific action or medication, you must indicate this on your child's registration form and complete an Individual Care Plan which includes an Emergency Action Plan and a Food Allergy/Intolerance Form that must be signed by your child's physician.

SIGN-IN

Parents and/or only those adults (18 years or older) authorized to pick up the child as noted on the registration form must sign in and out their child(ren) with a FULL signature. A driver's license will be required for identification when the attending staff is unfamiliar with your family.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for field trips will be in YMCA vehicles. Vehicles have regular safety checks and are equipped with seat belts, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and a spare tire. All Drivers are selected for their safe driving record, have insurance, receive Driver Training and are required to have First Aid and CPR training.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

The YMCA staff shall protect the child in care from child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as required under RCW chapter 26.44. A copy of the YMCA of Snohomish County Child Abuse Policy is available at your local YMCA.

Children in our program will receive an age-appropriate safe touch talk on a monthly basis. This talk is developed through prevention specialists and is meant to empower children to recognize unsafe situations and learn to protect themselves by getting help from a safe adult.

Corporal punishment will not be permitted on the child care premises by anyone including parents and staff. This includes biting, jerking, shaking, slapping, hitting, kicking, verbal, or any other means of inflicting pain. Child care staff are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspicion of child care abuse.

BABY-SITTING POLICY

YMCA staff may not baby sit program participants outside of YMCA programs.

CHILD PICK-UP AND UNSAFE CONDITION OF PARENT

The YMCA respects the rights of parents to access their own child. However, if YMCA staff feel a parent is in an unsafe condition to drive or otherwise leave with their child (such as under the influence of drugs or alcohol), the YMCA staff may suggest that the parent or the Y staff call the other parent, a friend or relative, or a cab. The YMCA staff may also call 911 for assistance and to report the incident.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents of all children in all of our programs are required to submit a Medical Release Form, giving the YMCA permission to seek medical attention for the child in the event of an emergency. Parents are required to update the YMCA on any change of home, work, and medical phone numbers.

In case of an evacuation emergency such as fire, bomb threat, or gas leak, children will be kept in the nearest safe area and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their child. In case of confinement to the facility, parents or emergency contact will be called as soon as possible and informed of procedures. In case of a catastrophic disaster, please call our out-of-area contact at the Spokane YMCA 1 509 838 3577.

IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

A member of the staff will carry out immediate first aid and/or call an aid car. All program staff are trained in first aid and CPR.

A member of the staff will contact parents if there is a serious injury. Depending on the seriousness of the injury, parents may choose to have their child remain in care or come and get their child if medical care is necessary. All injuries will be documented.

In the event of an emergency transport and the parent or designated person cannot be reached, the staff person in charge will have the authority to transport the child to a hospital via aid car accompanied by a staff person.

It is the responsibility of every individual, their parent or legal guardian to provide for their own accident and health coverage while participating in all YMCA activities.

HEALTH CARE PLAN

A complete copy of the Health Care Plan for YMCA of Snohomish County's licensed programs including communicable diseases, cleaning, blood borne pathogen procedures, food service, nutrition, and injury prevention is available at your local YMCA and at the child care center.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

The YMCA has an Emergency Response Plan. A copy is kept at the site for your review.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY

The YMCA of Snohomish County Emergency Closure Policy is for snow, severe weather, power outages, disaster, or any unforeseen reason that YMCA child care programs may need close without prior notice. All child care participants are encouraged to have a backup plan for emergencies. The YMCA will make every attempt to provide care; however, the YMCA cannot guarantee that staff will always be able to get to the center in every emergency situation. The YMCA will generally update the voice mail message on the center phones by approximately 5:30 a.m. and continually throughout the day to inform families of closures or delays to our child care program.

If we must close early, we will call parents and request children be picked up as soon as possible. Any site closure decision will be based upon weather conditions and road conditions reported by the Washington State Patrol and/or the State Department of Transportation.

BRANCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Family Branch	Address	Telephone
Everett Family YMCA	2720 Rockefeller Avenue Everett WA 98201	425 258 9211
Marysville Family YMCA	6420 60 th Drive NE Marysville WA 98270	360 653 9622
Mill Creek YMCA	13723 Puget Park Drive Everett, WA 98208	425 337 0123
Monroe Family YMCA	14033 Fryelands Blvd. Monroe WA 98272	360 805 1879
Mukilteo Family YMCA	10601 47 th Place W Mukilteo WA 98275	425 493 9622
Child Care Billing	2720 Rockefeller Avenue Everett WA 98201	425 258 9211 ext 121
YMCA of Snohomish County website	ymca-snoco.org	

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